

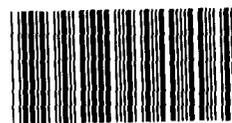
GAO

Report to the Honorable
Andy Ireland, House of Representative

April 1991

DEFENSE
PERSONNEL

Status of Flag Officers
Selectees, and Billets



143866



National Security and
International Affairs Division

B-243734

April 29, 1991

The Honorable Andy Ireland
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Ireland:

As you requested, we verified the number of Navy flag officers on active duty¹ as of February 1, 1991. More specifically, this report discusses the number of (1) flag officers and flag officer selectees and (2) flag officer billets that the Navy manages.

Results in Brief

As of February 1, 1991, there were 259 paid Navy flag officers on active duty. However, one was not charged against the Navy's end strength limitation. In addition, 73 other officers have been selected and are awaiting promotion to flag rank.

The number of flag officer billets reported as of February 1, 1991, was 404. The Navy manages all billets that are designated as flag officer billets regardless of the pay grades of the officers filling them or whether they are vacant.

Number of Flag
Officers and Selectees

Table 1 shows, by pay grade, the number of Navy officers being paid flag rank.

Table 1: Navy Officers Paid at O-7 and Above as of February 1, 1991

Pay grade	Title	Number
O-10	Admiral	
O-9	Vice admiral	
O-8	Rear admiral	
O-7	Rear admiral (lower half)	

A rear admiral fills the position titled "Physician to Congress," and, according to Department of Defense (DOD) officials, that position was charged against the end-strength limitation (258) being managed in DOD as of February 1, 1991. Both Office of the Secretary of Defense and Navy officials agree that the number of Navy admirals, not counting t

¹Flag officers that are paid at pay grades O-7 through O-10.

one filling the Physician to Congress position, is 258. In exempting the Physician to the Congress, DOD relies on Public Law 92-607, dated October 31, 1972, which states that "the incumbent [attending physician to the United States Congress] shall be considered to hold the rank of Rear Admiral, Medical Corps, United States Naval Reserve, for all purposes..." We determined the number of admirals was within the pay grade limitations contained in subsections of 10 U.S.C. 525.

In addition to the 259 flag officers, we identified another 73 Navy captains (O-6s) who, as of February 1, 1991, were awaiting promotion to flag rank. Of these 73 captains, 21 were filling O-7 flag billets and authorized to wear the insignia/uniform of a flag officer (frockings), 21 were filling O-7 flag billets but wearing a captain's insignia/uniform, and 31 were serving in O-6 billets, in training or between assignments.

Frocking is an administrative mechanism that is used by the Secretaries of the military departments to grant officers who have been selected for promotion and confirmed by the U.S. Senate and who are serving in a billet of the higher grade, but not yet promoted, the right to wear the insignia and uniform and assume the title of the next higher grade. Such officers do not (1) receive pay at the next higher grade, (2) gain seniority on the active duty list, (3) accumulate time in grade, or (4) assume the legal authority of the higher grade. A DOD directive provides a standardized frocking policy among the services and sets the aggregate limit (95) on the number of officers who can be frocked to the O-7 level at any one time. As of February 1, 1991, the Navy's allocated limit on frockings was 29.

DOD reported that 301 Navy flag officers and flag officer selectees were assigned, as of February 1, 1991, to O-7 through O-10 worldwide flag billets (see table 2).

Table 2: Flag Officers and Selectees Filling Flag Level Billets as of February 1, 1991

Pay grade	Officers		Total
	Flags	Selectees	
O-10	10		10
O-9	31		31
O-8	84		84
O-7	134		134
O-6		42	42
Total	259	42	301

Number of Flag Officer Billets

The Navy reported that, as of February 1, 1991, it was managing 404 billets classified at the flag level. Table 3 shows the status of those billets.

Table 3: Flag Officer Billets as of February 1, 1991

Officers wearing	Number
4 stars	
3 stars	
2 stars	
1 star	
Flag selects (no stars)	
Not filled by flags or flag selects	
	4

Scope and Methodology

We verified the number of flag officers by comparing and reconciling the names of those reported by the Office of the Secretary of Defense to those paid by the Navy. Regarding billets, we obtained data and views from joint officials in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and from Navy officials. We conducted our work in March and April 1991 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. As requested, we did not obtain formal agency comments; however, we did discuss the matters contained in this report with DOD officials during our review and incorporated their comments where appropriate.

Unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 5 days from its issue date. At that time we will send copies to the Chairmen, House and Senate Committees on Appropriations and on Armed Services; the Secretaries of Defense and the Navy; and the Director, Office of Management and Budget. Copies will be made available to others upon request.

Please contact me on (202) 275-3990 if you or your staff have any questions concerning this report. Other major contributors to this report were George E. Breen, Jr., Assistant Director, and William J. Wood, Evaluator-in-Charge.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul L. Jones". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the "Sincerely yours," text.

Paul L. Jones
Director,
Defense Force Management Issues

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